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ABSTRACT

These two booklets cover research in reading from 1968 through 1971. The first half of the first booklet covers the years 1968-1970 and includes summaries of general trends in reading, surveys, and research on specific dyslexia, the initial teaching alphabet and the beginning stages of learning to read, and linguistics and reading. The second half, which uses both British and American sources, contains a list of 54 articles and an annotated list of 35 books published from 1968-1970 concentrating on areas of research in which considerable interest was shown by teachers and researchers--general surveys, the initial teaching alphabet, other studies of early learning, linguistics and reading, specific dyslexia, and deprivation and reading. The second booklet discusses research articles which deal with dyslexia, remedial provision, remedial treatment, letter-name knowledge, preschoolers, materials, the initial teaching alphabet, and phonic "rules" and approaches to teaching. Also included are annotations for thirteen books published in 1971 exploring such areas as reading readiness, reading materials, innovations in teaching, the reading process, reading and linguistics, and slow learners in the secondary schools. (MF)

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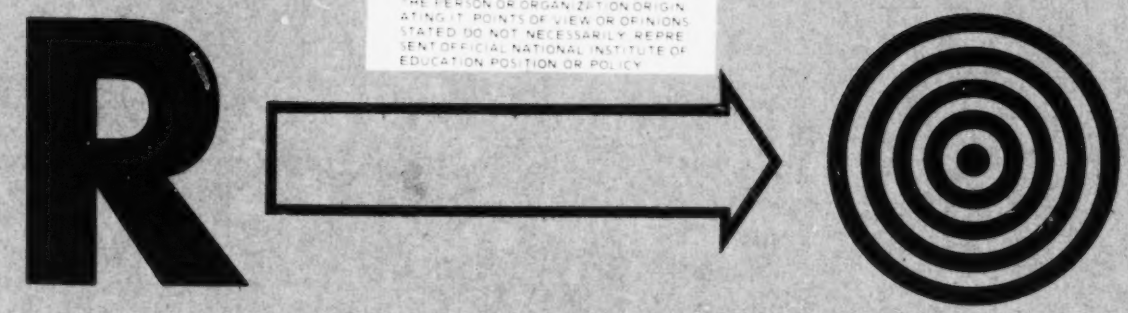

# READING RESEARCH 1968-1970

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## Introduction

In February 1972 the Centre for the Teaching of Reading brought out a booklet Reading Research 1971, which summarised the main articles on research and teaching reading in British publications during the previous year 1971. Articles of interest to British readers appearing in the IRA (International Reading Association) publications were also included. The information was summarised under different headings, so that teachers could refer to the sections most likely to be of interest to them. The booklet also included an annotated list of books on reading published during 1971. It is hoped that it will be possible to produce this type of annual review each year, so that teachers can easily keep up to date with the type of work being produced in educational journals and magazines which they may not be able to regularly read. A list of the books on reading published each year probably cannot be exhaustive, but may bring to teachers' notice titles which they may like to buy or borrow, which they may have missed when reading reviews of new books in the educational press.

The Centre for the Teaching of Reading opened in the summer of 1968, so it was thought that it might be useful if this series on research started with the year 1968. It was decided that it might be more useful to produce one booklet covering the three year period 1968-70, rather than three separate booklets. Also, as the publication was to cover a longer period than an annual review, it would not be possible to refer to all the articles appearing in journals, etc, during the period or the publication would be too long for the booklet format used in the series. It seemed advisable to concentrate on areas of research in which considerable interest was being shown by teachers, researchers and educationists, eg:

1 general surveys;
2 the Initial Teaching Alphabet;
3 other studies of early learning;
4 linguistics and reading;
5 specific dyslexia;
6 deprivation and reading.

## General trends during the period

Although no major general surveys of reading attainment results were published during the period, a series of surveys at local level added not only to our knowledge about standards in particular parts of the country, but also to the accumulating information about the size of the 'hard-core' of backward readers and the identifiable characteristics of specific dyslexia. Although little experimental work was being carried out in relation to the Initial Teaching Alphabet, inquiries into the use and effect of this medium led to further exploration of the factor of teacher effectiveness, and the study of the control of the teacher variable in reading research. Also, the work on i.t.a. concentrated attention on the function of signalling devices in clarifying the beginning stages of reading and the importance of young children understanding the language concepts involved in learning to read. This meant not only attention being paid to children's comprehension of the technical terms used in teaching reading but also greater awareness of the way in which teachers can facilitate or hinder this understanding.

The work in the linguistics area seemed to be developing two distinct strands, which in time will probably be found to have more in common than at present anticipated. One was the relationship between reading materials and children's language development and speech patterns, which led to a more critical look at existing reading schemes and materials. The second aspect seemed to be concerned with interpreting and assimilating work developed in the United States and New Zealand, based on the idea of reading being a 'psycholinguistic guessing game' in which children's oral reading errors or 'miscues' can be interpreted by the child's teacher as evidence of the strategies being used by the pupil to accomplish this learning task. Emphasis is placed upon the types of mistakes or 'miscues' rather than the number, and gradually researchers are trying to collect sufficient evidence to determine whether stages in acquiring the skill can be identified by the types of mistakes made, or whether

'miscues' occur mainly as a result of the type of reading materials or approach adopted by the teacher in the classroom.

Both in the area of specific dyslexia and that of deprivation and reading, a grea deal of the work being carried out seemed to be concerned with accurate identification of these children. Community surveys provided evidence of the way in which the number of children identified as having particular characteristics (eg left-handed) could differ according to the type and number of tests used. These surveys also provided information about the distribution of such characteristics among 'normal' child populations at different ages. These findings stressed the need for teachers at all levels of the primary school, to know not only about the stages in childrens' physical and psychological growth but also of the various stages in acquiring the skill. With both types of knowledge, teachers can be more effective in identifying and matching a pupil's developing skills to the appropriate level of reading materials. Inevitably this led to reappraisals of the adequacy of teachers' professional preparation. and consideration of the nature and function of in-service education.

Underlying most of the work in these areas was the realisation of the crude nature of the majority of measures of reading achievement available to researcher and teacher alike, and the need for improved diagnostic instruments. Running as a continuous thread through so much of the research of the last decade is concern for sharper, more accurate measuring instruments, particularly as researchers come to grips with their subject matter. This interest in improving their measuring tools, in clarifying terms such as 'reading readiness' and 'dyslexia', and realising the need to separate and control the teacher variable in research designs, reflects a more rigorous and one hopes 'scientific' approach by researchers to the study of teaching reading.

However, during the period there seemed few signs of the study of reading being accorded a higher level of academic status. The comparatively low status of reading both in Universities and Colleges of Education was reflected in the limitation of resources devoted to it. Often work appeared superficial and even lacking in scientific rigour, because insufficient resources were available to develop reliable, accurate assessment and measuring devices; to continue studies sufficiently long enough to provide longitudinal evidence; to evaluate, abstract and disseminate the information from valid studies while also incorporating ideas and work from related fields of study. If improvements in these three areas could be accomplished, reading research would appear more cumulative and would demonstrate that a concerted attack was being made on problems, both researchable and of educational importance.

**Surveys**

During the period, the National Foundation for Educational Research undertook a national survey of the reading attainment of eleven and fifteen year olds, which included the study of the influence of bilingualism in Wales on the teaching of reading. The findings of these general surveys were awaited with interest, following the discussion which greeted the previous D.E.S. survey findings reported in Progress in Reading 1948-1966 (1966). The general conclusion of that survey had been that the reported improvement in reading standards was probably little more than a recovery from the set-back of the war, and that teachers had little about which to be complacent. Some of the heat engendered by this controversy may have resulted from the participants' personal experience of reading standards within their own local areas. Certainly, local surveys (I.L.E.A. 1969; Bookbinder, 1970; Devon L.E.A. 1970; Rutter et al. 1970; Clark, 1970) suggest that reading standards differ considerably throughout the country, and that the large urban areas in particular are faced with reading problems.

For instance, in some of these areas the problem is undoubtedly complicated by the proportion of immigrants. The proportion of the total school population who are immigrants (D.E.S. definition of an immigrant is a child born outside England and Wales, or one born in those countries to parents who have not lived there for ten years) is not large, but the distribution of immigrants is very uneven. Thus teachers, particularly in London and the industrial areas of the Midlands, find they have a large

number of immigrant children with a variety of languages and customs in their classes. It is often necessary to teach these children English as a second language before tackling the problem of teaching them to read in it. The London Literacy Survey (I.L.E.A. 1969) found that the overall reading standards of the immigrants were markedly lower than those of non-immigrants both in regard to average scores and the proportion of good and poor readers; eg there were twice as many poor readers (reading age two years less than chronological age) in the immigrant group - one in four being poor readers.

During the period it was noticeable that there was an increasing interest in the content of teachers' professional courses, particularly from recently qualified teachers (Goodacre, 1969). Not only was there dissatisfaction expressed with the preparation for the teaching of reading, but in several of these surveys of teachers' opinions, there were references to teachers asking for more courses on the teaching of immigrants.

Generally teachers have been advised to concentrate on the language development of immigrants and 'disadvantaged' pupils, but several studies are beginning to indicate that it might be equally important to encourage the use in classrooms of constructional materials which will develop the manipulative ability and the spacing and sequential skills of these children; eg understanding of the terms 'beginning' and 'end', sequential order, scanning from left to right, etc (Mundy, 1970; McFie and Thompson, 1970).

In the United States, Goodman (1970) had strongly criticised the view that differences in language implied deficiency, and contended that there is a deep language structure unaffected by dialect differences. Uhl and Nurss (1970) suggested that socio-economic factors and their effects may be more important than sex and race differences, and that phonological, morphological, syntactical and lexical differences assume most importance when the child is mastering the decoding stage of learning to read, particularly at the word by word matching stage; ie when co-ordinating the spoken and written word. Therefore, dialect may assume most importance in regard to beginning reading materials. A reading series such as Nippers (Berg, 1969) represents an attempt to make reading materials more realistic on content but does not present a solution to the dialect problem, as the 'working-class' language used in the books seems to have been tidied up; ie it does not accurately represent the speech patterns of these children and their families.

A Survey of L.E.As.in 1970 (Goodacre, 1971) found that the majority of Local Education Authorities preferred to leave the assessment of reading standards to the heads of schools, although there was some evidence that an increasing number of L.E.As. were becoming aware of the advantages involved in regularly carrying out reading attainment surveys; ie finding children 'at risk' early in their schooling when they benefit from short-term remedial provision rather than having to be given long term treatment, including help for emotional difficulties; obtaining objective data on which to base decisions regarding the most effective use of scarce remedial resources; providing the opportunity to make a field evaluation of new or unfamiliar reading attainment tests. Also this survey found that the heads of individual schools tended to assess their pupils either subjectively on the basis of their observation of a child's behaviour, usually in relation to their progress in a published reading scheme, or by using a reading attainment test, more often than not one of word recognition, emphasising a child's ability to pronounce a word without help from contextual or language clues. Such tests use criteria of reading progress often at variance with the professed reading aims of the school, especially at the infant level.

Two new reading tests were published during the period. (Young, 1969; Carver, 1970), and the N.F.E.R. produced Reading Test BD, a time sentence completion test of 44 items, - standardization not completed. The Carver test, published by University of London Press, was a diagnostic test as well as a reading attainment test (word recognition). The choice of item by the child indicated different types of visual discrimination difficulties.

O'Kelly (1970) suggested the use of the English Picture Vocabulary Test as a means of screening late readers who might need special educational provision in their junior years. She argued that because a child's comprehension vocabulary is critical to success in learning to read, an objective test of 'listening vocabulary' might be useful for assessing readiness for reading instruction.

The School's Council Research Project in Compensatory Education re-examined the concept of reading readiness, and in the publication Reading Readiness edi. by Chazan, (1970) outlined the main forms of measuring readiness and concluded that a scale which measured early communication skills might be more useful to the infant teacher than a specific readiness test. Fisher and Williams (1969) experimented with the 'tell-a-story' technique pioneered by de Hirsch and her associates as a means of identifying young children likely to experience reading difficulties. Although in practice this method was found to have a major draw-back in the time that must be spent transcribing the story from tape recordings in order to obtain this essential qualitative/quantitative scoring, the technique could be successfully used with individual children, even if not applicable as a 'screening' device at the infant school level.

As part of the Compensatory Education Project, Sims and Williams (1969) studied the development of phonic skills in young children, using a sample of 96 infants selected on the basis of their reading ages on the Southgate W.R. Test. They developed two parallel test forms containing the same 76 phonic elements, each element being embedded in a nonsense 'word', and the child's phonic skill was assessed by asking him to recognise the nonsense word containing it. Highly significant differences were reported between reading age levels and the ability to recognise phonic elements in the nonsense words. This test has now been published (Swansea Test of Phonic Skills - Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1971). The idea behind it needs to be carefully assessed, and further experimental work is necessary to justify the claim that inability to identify specific phonic elements in nonsense words (where there are no linguistic or contextual clues to aid the reader as to pronunication of the nonsense word) does in fact act as an impeding factor to the extent envisaged by the test designers. Also, further evidence is needed regarding the effectiveness of the test as a diagnostic instrument. Merrit (1968) reported experiments with word tests using different types of word deletions, which may prove a useful technique for measuring the development of the intermediate reading skills.

**Specific dyslexia**

Local or community surveys conducted by a multi-disciplinary team, possessing a wide and varied experience of children with reading difficulties, can produce a considerable amount of information about normal and retarded readers which may be useful for examining the relevancy and validity of hypotheses suggested from experience with individual or atypical groups of children. Lovell and Gorton (1968) studied two groups of readers (9-10 years) of normal intelligence to discover whether normal and poor readers could be identified by their scores on visual-spatial and neuro-psychological tests. While no single factor was isolated by the tests of auditory-visual integration and motor performance, the evidence suggested that neurological impairment and reading disability were linked even when the subjects studied were not from a clinical population.

The aim of a survey of primary school children on the Isle of Wight (Rutter et. al. 1970) was to find out the incidence of a number of handicaps, intellectual, behavioural and physical. Using a sample of 2,300 children (9-12 years) the researchers found that approximately four per cent who were normal neurologically were severely retarded in reading; ie reading age more than two years behind chronological age. There were more boys than girls in this group, and there was evidence of delay in speech development and persistent speech problems, as well as a certain amount of emotional maladjustment. The latter appeared to be related to the children's learning difficulties rather than a precipitating factor in relation to their reading disability.

In the Scottish county of Dunbartonshire, Clark (1970) set out to discover the incidence figures for continued reading difficulty in children of average intelligence. She believed this information would indicate the size of the provision required and also provide evidence of the pattern of

disabilities, thus throwing some light on the type of provision needed. Clark was also interested in exploring ways of identifying such children sufficiently early to prevent, if possible. the development of severe reading disability. She screened 1,544 children (7-9 years) and after two years of schooling found that 15 per cent were non-readers (Reading Quotient of 85 or less). This group was tested again a year later, and 69 pupils were found to be still retarded; ie six per cent of the boys and three per cent of the girls of the original sample. At nine years, only nineteen children (15 boys and 4 girls) were severely and specifically retarded readers, representing 1.3 per cent of the original sample. She suggested that **severe** reading difficulty was not a problem of the magnitude envisaged by some authorities, but this was not to deny the importance of the fact that a number of children of average intelligence experienced prolonged reading difficulties. She found absences from school, overlarge classes, lack of parental help, frequent change of school, emotional problems, relatively low intelligence (not amounting to mental sub-normality), the presence of speech defects and poor auditory discrimination and poor visuo-motor co-ordination, were all important factors in relation to the acquisition of the skill.

Both the Dunbartonshire and Isle of Wight surveys noted the diversity of disabilities shown by the severely retarded group of children. There was no underlying pattern of disabilities common to this group, which could have provided a basis for one single remedial method for all the children so handicapped.

Gradually, it seemed that surveys like those of the Isle of Wight and Dunbartonshire were providing the evidence that there are **some** children of normal intelligence - a very small proportion of the total school population - who experience severe reading disabilities, which appear to be constitutional in origin. It is not at all clear, even at this stage, to what extent environmental factors such as poor teaching or parental pressure aggravate perceptual dysfunction in a particular child, or interact with developmental delays in the motivational process.

Also during this period, valuable work was being done as regards the explanation of particular characteristics associated with retardation and disability. For instance, the Isle of Wight survey reported no significant difference regarding **handedness** between poor readers and the normal controls, and Shearer (1968) who compared consistency of hand preference, performance in right or left discrimination, and finger localization for two groups of normal and backward readers (7-10 years) also found no significant differences in relation to these factors. In general, the retarded group performed less adequately, but there was sufficient overlap in the two groups to raise many questions about the importance of such characteristics as means of identifying the potential poor reader. It is of considerable interest then that Clark (1970) in her Dunbartonshire survey found that the number and type of tests of handedness used affected the incidence of crossed laterality reported. "The more tests of eyedness or handedness, the smaller proportion who would appear to be consistent". Left-handedness, left eyedness, mixed dominance or crossed laterality, are not in themselves predictors of reading failure.

The realisation that some children have particular reading difficulties for some time, and a few have a number of severe difficulties over a lengthy period, draws attention to the importance of providing different forms of remedial assistance and ensuring that teachers are made aware of the possibility of having to deal with a child with reading difficulty, whatever age of children they may be teaching. An incidental finding of the Isle of Wight survey was that the children in classes taught by teachers who had attended an in-service course of only three days duration, made two months more gain in reading age than was anticipated (Rigley, 1968). Ways of improving children's reading ability which could be suggested to L.E.As. concerned with reading standards are the establishing of remedial reading centres, greater use of peripatetic teachers, and the organisation of reading advisory services. However, there is little information available about the comparative effectiveness of these or other solutions (Rigley, 1968; Goodacre, 1971).

Cashdan and Pumfrey (1969) examined the effectiveness of weekly and semi-weekly treatment at the end of two terms and 22 months, respectively, but found no significant differences between these

groups or the no treatment group. These findings are similar to those in the classic experiment carried out earlier by Collins (1961), but Cashdan and Pumfrey have questioned the 'natural' improvement on the control groups which seems to occur in such experiments. It is possible that the 'untreated' control groups do, in fact, receive help in the form of advice given to their teachers by remedial staff and relief of pressure when some of their classmates, often the more demanding pupils, are taken out of the class and receive special attention. The design of research into the effectiveness of remedial provision has improved during the last decade as researchers have become more aware of the different variables involved, but more information is still needed on the characteristics of children selected for remedial help, and the criteria for allocation to different sized groups. Sampson (1969) has provided more up to date information about the Remedial Education Service, including details of the incentives found to be useful in this work by remedial teachers. The most often mentioned category was related to the retarded readers' experience of success. In other words, the 'poor' readers' 'self-image' was an important factor in the remedial situation. Wooster (1970) using a Repertory Grid test looked at the question of when children became aware of themselves as readers, and how failure in this task affects their self-concepts and their ability to accept responsibility for their level of reading attainment.

The L.E.A. survey previously mentioned (Goodacre, 1971) provided some information about remedial provision in 1970. Half the L.E.As. taking part in this survey thought of remedial provision solely in terms of the provision made by individual schools, although some L.E.As. evidenced considerable concern over their backward readers and were tackling the problem through a variety of different approaches, which included advice on reading materials (difficulty and interest level), forms of assessment and diagnosis, and remedial techniques; sustained in-service education programmes; special allowances for the reading material needs of backward readers; setting up of Centres for the treatment of such children and the provision of facilities of use to remedial teachers working in schools. The School Psychological Service generally assisted backward readers, but in practice, because of heavy case loads, understaffing of the Service and the referral of 'difficult' children for emotional rather than attainment problems, the assistance of the Service was often limited to advice to the remedial teachers. These teachers were usually not specifically trained for the task, and where L.E.As. required special qualifications, these were usually in the field of slow learning children. Therefore there was no assurance that such teachers were familiar with recent developments in reading research and remedial techniques. Also, a common practice was to use part-time teachers, who might have only returned to the profession recently or probationers beginning their teaching career, to teach groups of backward readers in schools.

**i.t.a. and the beginning stages of learning to read**

Downing and Latham (1969) reported the progress after five years of children from the first i.t.a. experiments. The i.t.a. children were superior in reading comprehension (N.F.E.R. Sentence Reading) and on the N.F.E.R. English Progress Test, which included sub-tests of Capital letters, Story Comprehension, Past and Present Tenses, Spelling, Sentence Completion and Abbreviation. Downing (1969a) in a re-analysis of the i.t.a. studies, looked at the proportion of failure occurring in the i.t.a. and t.o. groups, and found that all the tests except speed of reading, showed that "i.t.a. generally reduced the incidence of poor reading and poor spelling both before and after transition to t.o." Downing suggested that this information might be of particular interest to teachers of classes containing slower learners, and cited the evidence from a survey he had carried out of the opinion of teachers in E.S.N. schools using i.t.a. (Downing, 1968) which suggested that i.t.a. helped slow learners by reducing the confusion resulting from dealing with the irregularities of t.o. Downing developed this idea of the importance of eliminating 'cognitive confusion' at this early stage of children's learning in several papers (Downing 1969b, Downing 1970a, 1970b). He continued the work initiated by Reid (1966) into children's understanding of the purpose of written language features and the development of their comprehension of the technical and abstract terms used in the teaching of reading. He used the following procedures to stimulate 13 five-year-olds to respond to concepts involved in reading and writing; an open-ended interview; an interview using

concrete stimuli such as colour photos. books and model toy buses. the first two techniques and a yes/no game using tape recorded auditory stimuli involving non-human noises. phonemes. and words. He found considerable confusion amongst the children as to the use of categories such as 'word' and 'sound'. He suggested that children needed help with understanding the purpose and nature of written language, and concluded that an important function of i.t.a. was the way in which it facilitated children's understanding of the part played by linguistic structure in the reading process.

In 1969 the Schools' Council's independent evaluation of i.t.a. was published. The report written by Warburton and Southgate included an evaluation by Professor Warburton of all the research evidence available at the time, including a detailed appraisal of the methodology used in the experiments. Southgate collected and evaluated the views of a sample of i.t.a. users and those closely connected with its use. The report also included suggestions for future research projects on i.t.a. and drew attention to the urgent need for the construction of suitable tests of reading for primary school age children. The verbal evidence collected by Southgate supported the view that children using i.t.a. learned to read earlier, more easily and at a quicker speed, and were better in writing and spelling than the children using t.o. However, some doubt must be cast on the validity of these subjective impressions, in the light of the fact that so many of these people were unaware of the setback experienced by the i.t.a. children after transition which showed up clearly on objective reading test results. Warburton was extremely critical of the design and the statistical methods used in most of the i.t.a. experiments. He considered the two British experiments the most satisfactory. Of course, it must be acknowledged that the second experiment benefitted from the mistakes of the first. Somewhat surprisingly, following his critical examination of the research evidence, Warburton concluded that i.t.a. was a superior medium to t.o. in teaching young children to read.

An interesting experiment by Milne and Fyfe (1969) involving i.t.a. examined the possibility of controlling and assessing the teacher variable. No approach to reading (children were taught by i.t.a., t.o., and Stott's Programmed Reading Kit) showed a significant superiority on any one of the tests or measures used at the end of the third year of schooling.

Jones (1968) compared the results of the second i.t.a. experiment with his own Colour Story Reading experiment results and concluded that the latter produced superior results in both reading and spelling, for high, average and low achievers.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that since these experiments were carried out Southgate (1971) has given a paper which examines and evaluates this work on the effect of changes in the medium (eg colour codes, i.t.a., signalling systems, etc). Comparing colour codes with i.t.a. she summarised the results obtained in experimental work and analysed the main differences between these techniques, emphasizing the way in which each medium sought to provide the child with a uniform method of decoding new words. These new media share a common attribute; they are based on the belief that the irregularities of t.o. increase children's difficulties at the beginning stage. The codes devised abolish or diminish the inconsistencies of t.o. at the initial stages, but involve areas of varying difficulty; ie supply of reading materials; size and nature of the basic learning 'load'; transfer stage; teacher's flexibility of approach; similarity between school and home regarding written language form. She clarifies the situation at present facing teachers by noting not only the advantages of particular new mediums, but also the features which could be considered as drawbacks. As she states "Whether to use a new medium in preference to t.o. and, if so, which one to select, is a personal choice to be made by the staff of a school. They cannot make it until they have listed their own criteria of assessments based on their own priorities regarding children's acquisition of the skills of reading and writing, against the framework of their total beliefs, aims and plans regarding the whole sphere of primary education".

**Linguistics and reading**

In the research on the effect of changes in the medium, it has been difficult to know exactly what occurred in the control groups. Some of the criticisms of the British i.t.a. experiments carried

the implication that this research was dealing with the comparison of a structured with a comparatively non-structured or 'laissez-faire' approach to the teaching of reading (Haas, 1969). For instance, the writer's 1968 (Goodacre, 1969a) Survey of the teaching of reading in the infant school produced evidence that 'normal' practice in England probably placed less emphasis upon a systematic and structured approach than for instance in Scottish schools (eg comparison of differences in practice, Goodacre and Clark, 1971). The writer inquired into the use of published reading schemes and found that the group of English teachers placed great emphasis upon the reading scheme as a means of assessing their pupils' progress, and few of the teachers adopted a diagnostic approach to 'hearing' their children read aloud; ie they seldom recorded pupils' difficulties or types of reading errors. Downing also noted this ritualistic aspect of teaching children to read in English classrooms, and as a result of his experimental work on the relationship of children's language concepts to their progress at the early stages, stressed the need for making reading more relevant to children's cognitive development, and less a ritual performed to gain adult approval (1970b). Also, the writer found in her survey that four out of five English teachers preferred 'incidental' phonics, ie telling children their 'sounds' or drawing attention to phoneme/grapheme correspondences when pupils encountered words they could not recognise by sight, rather than systematically following a planned phonic programme. The most popular published reading schemes were predominantly of the controlled vocabulary type, so it could be concluded that during the sixties 'normal' practice in English schools tended to be towards a comparatively non-structured approach.

Certain recent work deriving from linguistics has, however, had some influence upon the quality of teachers 'hearing' of children, and the writer's personal impression is that teachers are adopting a more diagnostic approach to teaching reading, although this is still primarily through the medium of informal methods - listening more actively to children's reading aloud and their errors - rather than through the use of diagnostic reading tests. Mention must be made at this stage of Clay's work which, although not carried out in Britain, is likely to be influential (eg Lavender, 1970; Goodacre, 1970a). A report appeared in 1969 of Clay's study of the learning strategies adopted when learning to read by New Zealand five-year-olds in their first year at school (Clay, 1969). She found that the children progressed from page matching to line matching, to locating words in relation to the spaces between words, thus co-ordinating spoken and written words. This expressionless, word by word, stage of reading aloud appeared to be an important stage in children's acquisition of the reading skill, and an absence of 'fluency' (a characteristic emphasised by many teachers as a criterion of progress, Goodacre 1970b) did not necessarily imply a lack of understanding of what was being read. Discussing her analysis of the mistakes pupils made when reading aloud, and their self-correction behaviours, Clay concluded that the very complexity of reading material which provided rich cue sources for the child who could discover the regularities of the code involved in reading, might present confusion to the child of limited language skill. She suggested that information processing would be given the greatest scope if the method of teaching reading allowed the child's spontaneous speech as an aid to make a 'good' guess or word match, stressed flexible and varied word-solving techniques, and encouraged pupils to work at their errors or 'poor' guesses.

Mackay and Thompson (1968) in their book explaining the research behind the Breakthrough to Literacy reading materials, were very critical of the usual type of published reading schemes being used in schools, where the language is artificial, and the use of a controlled vocabulary makes for reading materials which seldom match the language of children or their wide interests.

Peters (1970) studied the historical development of published reading schemes since the beginning of the century, and concluded that there was evidence to suggest that the impact of linguistics on reading would help to resolve the traditional conflict between look-and-say and phonic teaching methods; "by clarifying and spelling out the various supportive and corroborative cues in reading ..... It is this complexity of cues that will most successfully provide an integrated attack on reading. It makes heavy demands on a writer; for the material must be progressively phonic yet fulfil all readability criteria (and be within the child's idiom and interests so that at every word and within every word there are, as the child reads, **expectations easily and inevitably fulfilled**). These expectations derive from linguistic constraints acquired, at least in favoured children, long before

coming to school ...." (the writer's italics). Peters suggested several aims which publishers of schemes might consider, including the use of words which made syntactic and semantic as well as phonic demands simultaneously on the young reader, so giving him the opportunity to use multiple clues, correcting himself when what he read failed to sound 'like language' (ie that children's errors are corrected and can be explained in the light of 'cognitive dissonance', Clay, 1969). Peters outlined the advantages of the early stages of schemes approximating very closely to young children's language (sentence length, sentence structure, word difficulty, word frequency, word depth), in other words, to what are generally accepted as readability criteria (Dormuth, 1966).

Several studies examined popular reading schemes from the point of view of language constraints. For instance, Garside (1968) studied two popular reading schemes in relation to sentence length and vocabulary, and compared them to the language of a group of normal and a group of E.S.N. children in an interview and a play situation respectively. Reid (1970) looked at the structure of four schemes, including the Downing i.t.a. Readers, using an earlier classic study by Strickland (1962) of the relationship between speech structures of children and their reading textbooks, as the starting point for her study. The entire paper merits close reading. She suggested further experimental work into the effects of different language structures in published reading schemes, including the exploration of the use of compound structures, and the reading difficulty for children of deleting 'moveable' elements in the sentence structure particularly for children coming from different types of home backgrounds. Reid's paper provides a number of insights into the way in which popular reading schemes can use linguistic structures which are unfamiliar and awkward for children because of the author's determination to repeat words often and in different contexts as a means of developing children's powers of word recognition. Birnie (1968 and 1970) examined popular readers from the point of view of the consistency of sound/symbol relationships encountered by children when the readers were written in i.t.a. or t.o.

Peters raised the question of the relevancy of illustrations in reading schemes in her paper on trends in schemes, and Keir (1970) reported a study into the use of word illustrations as phonic clues, which outlined some of the problems arising from the use of pictures with young children. The young reader may not be familiar with the conventions of illustrators, and may be mislead by the use of shading or incomplete drawings, quite apart from identifying illustrated words by inappropriate or incorrect terms: eg **lamp post** (l) being used in reading apparatus but the child calling it a **street-light** (st).

**Conclusion**

Reviewing the research produced in the period 1968-70 it is possible to discover certain important trends. Some of these developments have not been as fully exploited as they might have been, because to a large extent the scope of reading research in this country is determined by the efforts of individual researchers convinced of the importance of their work, who must however 'cut their cloth' according to the means available to them. As there is no central institution with responsibility for co-ordinating and guiding research and abstracting and disseminating the results, it can be difficult to discover the extent and scope of the work being carried out. It can be done, but it is a time consuming operation. This communication difficulty acts as a limiting factor, affecting probably both the quantity and the quality of reading research being done. Several national bodies have taken an interest in reading and related areas of study, but unfortunately not on a sustained basis (eg N.F.E.R., National Children's Bureau, D.E.S., Schools Council).

For instance, the Schools Council finance enabled an independent report to be made on the i.t.a. experiments. Professor Warburton classified a number of the issues involved in experiments in reading method, and the Report drew attention to the problems involved in using the reading tests then available for work with young children and in an educational climate when the criterion of 'reading success' had changed from those accepted when the tests were originally produced. The report presented a number of research studies which were needed to fully realise the potential value of the i.t.a. experiments. However, the Schools Council resources towards the end of this period

were diverted on to how children can use the reading skill for their own interests and purposes (eg NATE study of children as readers; Sheffield Institute of Education investigation into children's reading habits, etc). It was as if 'beginning reading' had been given enough attention for the moment, and now the focus of research must be directed to the use of the skill. Obviously this was a laudable aim. Work by Alderson (1968) and Wragg (1968), as well as Professor Merritt's consideration of the development of the intermediate reading skills (1970) suggested that the later stages of the development of the reading skill merited attention, but it would be a great pity if the continued study of promising aspects of an area of research were always left to the enthusiasm and enterprise of individual researchers. It is as if the initial surveying and opening of a mining area were carried out by large mineral firms with all their technological resources and then the actual mining was left to individual prospectors with their wash pans, picks and shovels, to get the most out of any rich deposit. This is a legitimate method, but a slow one for producing sufficient raw material for the consumer - in this case, the teacher in the classroom concerned with how to facilitate children's learning of this essential skill. Another problem of increasing importance during this period was that of how to disseminate findings likely to influence curriculum decisions. Schools Council policy was to fund many short projections (of about four years) rather than fewer longer ones, but it was increasingly obvious that funding was necessary to finance projects for an additional 'dissemination' year, eg Breakthrough to Literacy. If resources are devoted to projects as worth while experiments or fact finding explorations, it is also necessary to cost in the means to disseminate the findings and if publication of materials is involved 'monitoring' services which can collect, collate and summarise the 'feedback' from teachers using the materials in 'ordinary' school conditions. The main need appeared to be for national bodies such as the Schools Council who undertake research, to concentrate more effort and training on the successful take-up and survival of the projects they initiated. This might mean the funding of fewer projects, but possibly that in itself might lead to more realistic evaluation of the planning of projects before they got under way. It appeared to the writer that sometimes insufficient attention was paid to the following factors:-

1 under costing of technical assistance, leading to the uneconomic use of the experienced personnel with appropriate teaching reading experience;

2 inadequate estimation of the time involved in field work (eg going back to past absentees, visiting schools on 'convenient' days, etc;

3 the fact that reading projects might be given a lower priority in the queue for several resources and facilities, eg computer time, statistical analysis assistance, etc.

There was a real danger that the shortage of experienced and research qualified personnel combined with the paucity of financial resources available for reading research, might result in work which often seemed to be of limited value to the classroom teacher, particularly if the implications were not clearly made. The academic critic might equally criticise such work on the basis that it lacked scientific rigour.

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This article was based on one entitled "Reading", which appears as a chapter in Volume III, Educational Research in Britain, (in the press), London University Press.

**SOME BOOKS PUBLISHED IN 1968**

BUROS, O.K. (1968) Reading Tests and Reviews. New Jersey: The Gryphon Press. pp. 542.

An American publication, this is the first Mental Measurements Yearbook Monograph published to meet the needs of reading specialists and teachers. (The Mental Measurement Yearbooks are published regularly, reviewing the various tests produced in the English-speaking world. The Seventh M.M.Y. was published in 1972). This volume includes a comprehensive bibliography of reading tests as of early 1968, a reprinting of all reading test reviews in the first six M. M. Ys.. and a master classified index to all other tests and reviews in the present six M. M. Ys.

CHAMBERS, A. (1968) The Reluctant Reader. Pergamon Press, pp. 161.

The author estimates that about 60 per cent of the British adolescent literate population could be classed as 'reluctant readers' - they can read but are disinclined to put their skill to work. particularly on creative literature. Reasons for this reluctance are outlined and solutions suggested. Useful section of appendices lists books the writer found useful with such pupils.

CROSBY, R.N.M. and LISTON, R.A. (1968) Reading and the Dyslexic Child. Souvenir Press, pp. 241.

Written by a neurologist and a journalist, this readable book is intended for parents, teachers and psychologists. Stresses the importance of brain function and inappropriateness of certain forms of remedial treatment - need for treatment to consider individual's perceptual weaknesses and strengths. Section on normal reading instruction includes brief historical resume of teaching methods, also a number of case histories included.

DEAN, J. (1968) Reading, Writing and Talking: A. and C. Black, pp. 208.

The Author provides a good account of modern trends in encouraging language skills in the primary school. Emphasises the use of children's own experiences to encourage talk. Meaning and interest are stressed as vital elements in language growth. Because of the wide scope of the book, some sections are rather brief - good as an introductory text.

DOWNING, J. and BROWN, A.L. ed. by (1968). The Third International Reading Symposium: Today's Child and Learning to Read. Cassell. pp. 205.

Papers on the modification of the school curriculum as the result of recent changes in school and home, read at a Southampton University Institute of Education conference. Includes an often quoted paper by Downing, re-assessing the concept of reading readiness and whether children should start reading earlier.

GOODACRE, E.J. (1968) Teachers and their Pupils' Home Background. London: N.F.E.R. pp. 170.

Second report of the N.F.E.R. project "Teaching Beginners to Read", deals with a detailed study of infant teachers' attitudes and background - personal and professional - and their relation to the teachers' expectations of the progress of their pupils' reading.

LAWSON, K. (1968) - Revised 1971. Children's Reading. Leeds: Institute of Education, pp. 26.

A small booklet based on a survey of reading materials, it is designed to help teachers and parents in the selection of their children's reading materials. Reading and interest ages given for a number of reading schemes and school subject series; eg nature study, religious education, etc.

MOYLE, D. (1968) The Teaching of Reading. Ward Lock Education, pp. 214.

A practical book, particularly important at the time it was published, for insisting that the vast majority of children need to be taught to read - that they cannot rely upon the magic of a "rich environment" to do the trick. Includes plenty of detailed information and suggestions for planning a logical progression in teaching reading. Particularly useful for Junior teachers and those in remedial work.

RAVANETTE, A. (1968) Dimensions of Reading Difficulties. Pergamon, pp. 102.

In successive chapters, the author deals with head's attitudes to reading failure. pssible cognitive weaknesses in the child himself, problems produced by home and school environments, contribution of neurologists towards defining dyslexia, and finally the child's perception of himself as a reader. Two introductory chapters deal with the general background and reading process. last two chapters review situation and outline the implications for teaching. A somewhat controversial book.

WAINWRIGHT, G. (1968) Towards Efficiency in Reading. Cambridge University Press, pp. 102.

Consists of instructions as to how a reader may gain the ability to read faster and more efficiently, together with a series of ten passages of English proce for practice. Also suggestions for additional practices.

**1969**

GATTEGNO, C. (1969) Reading with Words in Colour. Reading: Educational Explorers Ltd, pp. 260 and appendices.

A substantial volume which summarises Dr. Gattegno's six years' work on his teaching system. Basic idea is that the child should develop his awareness of what Gattegno calls the 'algebra' of language by which he means ways in which by means of 'rules' (of addition, reversal, insertion, etc), a limited set of phonemes can produce a limitless set of words, and a limited vocabulary, a limitless set of sentences. His system has some affinity with some of the views on reading developed by linguists.

GEORGIADES, N. (1969) The Initial Teaching Alphabet in Remedial Groups. Harrap, pp 97.

A concise and informative account of an experiment, in which i.t.a. proved to be no more beneficial than t.o. Author stressed need for further research on use of i.t.a. in remedial reading groups.

HAAS, W. edi. by (1969) Alphabets for English. Manchester: University Press, pp. 100.

A book about the problems involved in orthography and spelling reform. Included sections on i.t.a.: Follick's orthography, 'New Spelling', Shaw's reform, and Wijk's 'Regularised English'.

ROBERTS, G.R. (1969) Reading in the Primary School. Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 109.

This book is divided into sections which include topics such as the skills and sub-skills necessary to learn to read, classroom organisation, reading in the Junior school, and a method for teaching slow readers. (Fernald). Puts forward a well reasoned case for a more systematic approach to the teaching of reading.

PITMAN, Sir J. and St. JOHN, J. (1969) Alphabets and Reading. Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, pp. 349.

Divided into three parts - reading process and English orthography: structure, use and effectiveness of i.t.a. World i.t.a. and the spread of English. Includes a section on variations in pronunciation and i.t.a., also a useful section on how to write i.t.a. and its use in remedial classes.

STAIGER, R. and ANDRESEN, O. edi. by (1968) Reading: A Human Right and a Human Problem. I.R.A.: Newark, Delaware, U.S.A., pp. 188.

Proceedings of the Second World Congress on Reading, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1968. Covered beginning reading, comprehension, preparation of teaching materials, programmes, teacher education, and reading problems. British contributors were Dr. Joyce Morris, Miss Vera Southgate, and Professor M.D. Vernon.

WARBURTON, F.W. and SOUTHGATE, V. (1969). i.t.a.: An Independent Evaluation. John Murray and W. & R. Chambers, pp. 321.

Describes the inquiry set up by the Schools Council to evaluate the evidence on the use of i.t.a. and its effectiveness; also to suggest further research which might be necessary. Reported on number of schools using i.t.a. and collected the view of different groups; eg i.t.a. users, educationists, parents, etc. Also examined the research on i.t.a. carried out in the U.S.A. and this country. Includes an admirable discussion by Professor Warburton of this research and the variables involved, and suggestions for further research.

**1970**

BELL, P. (1970) Basic Teaching for Slow Learners. F. Muller, pp. 246.

A book for teachers of backward children. Those concerned with remedial reading would find of interest the chapter on language development and the two chapters on reading - the first describing a variety of activities for use with children having particular reading difficulties, and the second giving advice on how to choose appropriate reading materials for each child. Comprehensive lists of published reading schemes, supplementary readers, apparatus and materials appropriate for each reading age included.

CHAZAN, M. edi. by (1970) Reading Readiness. Swansea: University Faculty of Education. pp. 80.

Comprises seven articles based on lectures given on a Teachers' Course on reading readiness. A stimulating and practical book which achieved a useful balance between theory, research, practice and innovation. Gets over the idea that reading readiness is not a 'once and for all' concept but rather a continuous, on-going phase in a developmental process. Includes contributions by Williams, Tansley and Goodacre.

CLARK, M. (1970) Reading Difficulties in Schools. Penguin, pp. 144.

Provides an account of a community (Dunbartonshire) study of specific reading difficulties and discussion concerning the educational implications of the findings. A community study was chosen on the reasoning that conclusions cannot be drawn about the significance of relationships between severe reading disability and particular characteristics (eg left handedness) in a selected sample, if one does not know how these relationships compare with those in the parent population.

DANIELS, J. C. edi. by (1970) Reading: Problems and Perspectives. U.K.R.A., Ward Lock, pp. 160.

Paper from the UKRA Nottingham Conference held in 1967. About half the papers were concerned with evaluating research on changes in medium, eg. i.t.a. and signalling systems, particularly those using colour. The Plowden Report was considered. Underlying the Conference papers was a growing understanding that "acquiring literacy was not a once and for all acquisition of a set of primary skills, but a unitary process in the development of higher level literacy skills, until literacy becomes one of several ways of understanding reality".

CLARK, M. and MAXWELL, S. edi. by (1970) Reading: Influence on Progress. Ward Lock, pp. 128.

Papers from the UKRA Edinburgh Conference held in 1968. Included papers on early deprivation and reading retardation, dyslexia, preparation of teachers, and modern classroom practice; eg teaching reading and the integrated day. Contributors were classroom teachers, lecturers, researchers, and visiting American 'experts'. Covers a wide range of topics.

FRANKLIN, A. F. and NAIDOO, S. edi. by (1970) Assessment and Teaching of Dyslexic Children. Invalid Children's Aid Association. pp. 124.

The Word Blind Centre for Dyslexic Children in London was established by the Invalid Children's Aid Association in 1963 for the assessment and teaching of children suffering from this disorder. The Centre closed in 1971. This book reports the lectures given at teachers' Courses in the Centre in 1969. The historical and theoretical aspects of the subject are covered by papers by Vernon and Critchley; chapters by Naidoo and Thomas explain the intellectual and attainment testing of the Centre. Final chapters are devoted to a range of remedial approaches found to succeed with these children; eg Stillman Programme. Good chapters by Cotterell based on her own experience with these children.

GARDNER, K. edi. by (1970) Reading Skills - Theory and Practice. Ward Lock, pp. 120.

Papers from the UKRA Nottingham Conference held in 1967. Included Southgate's important paper on "The Importance of Structure in Beginning Reading". The Conference concentrated on reading skills - it was felt that interest had centred too much on different methods rather than an analysis of the type of skills needed by pupils at different stages of their schooling.

HILDICK, W. (1970) Children and Fiction. Evans, pp 204.

Written by a well-known children's writer, the book presents a good case for the story book which answers a child's emotional needs and provides a widening of experience through identification with vivid characters. Stresses the responsibility of the writer, who writes for children.

HUGHES, J.M. (1970) Aids to Reading. Evans, pp. 128.

Offers practical help, mainly to teachers who require definite information. Because it mentions particular materials, teaching aids, some of this information may date quickly, eg Talking Page no longer available. About a third of the book deals with making reading games and apparatus.

MILES, T.R. (1970) On Helping the Dyslexic Child. Methuen Educational, pp. 70.

Short book written for parents and teachers without knowledge of remedial work. Clearly written but tends to oversimplify the problems of teaching children with prolonged reading difficulty.

O'HALLORAN, G. (1970) i.t.a.- Teach Yourself Books. English University Press, pp. 144.

Written by an i.t.a. enthusiast, this is an account of i.t.a. for parents and teachers interested in finding out about how to use this change in medium.

PAPPAS, G. (1970) Reading in the Primary School. Macmillan Educational, pp. 270.

Revised edition of an Australian book published first in 1961. Includes additional material on changes in medium. A straightforward introductory text.

PURTON, R.W. (1970) Surrounded by Books. Ward Lock. pp. 112.

A book of practical guidance for primary teachers wanting to make books readily available for pupils; includes simple methods of classification.

RUTTER, M., TIZARD, J. and WHITMORE, K. (1970) Education, Health and Behaviour. Longmans. pp. 474.

Account of a series of surveys conducted between 1964 and 1965 on the education, health and behaviour of children aged 9-11 years, living on the Isle of Wight. Aim was to give a comprehensive picture of children showing one or more types of handicap, ie intellectual and educational retardation, psychiatric and physical disorder - education retardation was in terms of reading ability. Interesting findings included (a) reading and intellectually retarded frequently had multiple handicaps; (b) one in six of reading retarded had a psychiatric disorder and one in eight, a physical one.

SOUTHGATE, V. (1970) i.t.a. What is the evidence? Chambers and Murray. pp. 80.

An abridged version of the research report prepared for the Schools Council.

SOUTHGATE, V. and ROBERTS. G.R. (1970) Reading - Which Approach? London University Press, pp. 215.

A useful book written to help teachers formulate their ideas so that they can select an approach and decide about medium, materials, etc, suited both to their own outlook and to the needs of their class.

THOMPSON, B. (1970) Learning to Read. Sidgwick and Jackson, pp. 128.

A very readable book in which the author does a magnificent demolition job on published reading schemes - the controlled vocabulary type. She has some interesting comments about the use of reading tests, but generally a rather superficial book.

WILLIAMS, A.A. (1970) Basic Subjects for Slow Learners. Methuen Educational.

A practical book based on the author's considerable experience with E.S.N. children. includes detailed account of information the reader can get from reading tests and a section on the teaching of phonics.

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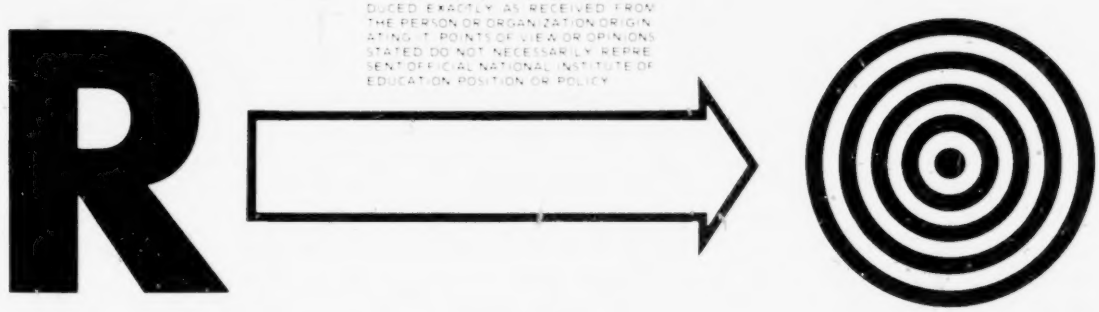

# READING RESEARCH 1971

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Dyslexia

Reviewing the research in 1971, much of the attention seems to have centred on reading backwardness, particularly severe reading disability and the concept of 'dyslexia'. This topic received a 'good airing' in a 'Symposium on Reading Disability' (British Journal Educ. Psychology, 41(1), 1-22), when four well-known workers in this field discussed the problems of terminology, incidence and treatment. T.R. Miles re-examined the arguments for and against the use of the term 'dyslexia'. Dr. Ingram argued that 'specific developmental dyslexia' could not be described as a disease entity since it appeared to be a syndrome of difficulties resulting from different factors usually but not always found in combinations - some intrinsic, others depending upon the social and educational environment. Sandhya Naidoo examined the two basic concepts implicit in the term 'specific dyslexia' and major hypotheses put forward to account for the constitutional nature of the disability. Margaret Clark described her Dunbarton investigations making the point that certain variables were found to be associated with slow reading progress, but that did not mean that these were necessarily causal factors.

The American I.R.A. journal The Reading Teacher also carried an article 'Word games in reading diagnosis' (The Reading Teacher, 24(4), 331-335) which dealt with the need to develop some standard terminology having broad acceptance among educators and so facilitate communication about, and understanding of the learning problems of slow and retarded readers. The German viewpoint was described in 'The Problem of Dyslexia' by Retz and Zeber (Remed. Educ. 6(3), 39-42), based on an information leaflet published for German teachers to help with the recognition and treatment of the disability.

Crowther (Remed. Educ. 6(2), 37-39) reported the findings of a screening survey in Surrey, which included the fact that the greatest proportion of children failing (defined as reading age more than one year less than chronological) were of no more than average ability - a finding similar to that of Clark in Dunbartonshire. In the Surrey survey, 1.4 per cent of children of above average intelligence (110+) were one year behind in reading. The growing realisation that some children have particular reading difficulties for some time, and a few (possibly a very few) have a number of severe difficulties over a lengthy period, draws attention to the importance of providing different forms of remedial assistance and ensuring that teachers be made aware of the possibility of having to deal with children with reading difficulties, irrespective of the age range taught.

Professor Gredler of the Temple University, Philadelphia gave a paper at the 1970 U.K.R.A. conference at Durham on 'Severe reading disability - some important correlates' which is reproduced in the U.K.R.A. Conference Proceedings Reading and the Curriculum (Ward Lock Educational). It has an extensive bibliography. The major account of this subject was Professor Vernon's book Reading and Its Difficulties, which devoted a chapter and some fifty pages to discussing the evidence and theories related to 'specific developmental dyslexia', and the effects of remedial treatment on dyslexia. Her book includes both an Index of Authors and subjects, and cites over 100 references mainly to researches published in the last five years.

The U.K.R.A. book Reading and the Curriculum also included two papers on the problem of adult illiteracy, which has been receiving more attention during the past few years. Dean's paper 'Adult Illiteracy - the General Position' (p237-239) describes means of identifying these people, and describes the facilities and provision now available. (For details of Newsletter, teaching centres, and reading materials contact Mr. N. Dean, Sunderland College of Education, Ryhope Road, Sunderland SR2 7EE).

## Remedial Provision

The Reading University School of Education L.E.A. survey (Provision for Reading -Goodacre) found that L.E.A.s differed in regard to the generally accepted criterion of 'backwardness', and that remedial teachers and those working with small groups of 'backward' readers were more likely than not to be untrained for the task. Indeed, a common practice was to use part-time teachers, often only recently returned to the profession, for teaching these groups of 'backward' readers. Half the L.E.A.s left the question of remedial provision to the heads of individual schools. Where L.E.A.s were concerned over the needs of 'backward' readers, they tackled the problem on a broad front - providing advice on reading materials, assessment, diagnosis, etc; providing sustained in-service programmes; allowing special allowances for reading material needs of slow readers; settling up Centres for treatment of such pupils and provision of facilities of use to school-based remedial teachers.

## Remedial Treatment

Cashdan et al. (Educ. Research 13(2), 98-105) reported on the effectiveness of remedial provision. Group size appeared to be of little importance until groups were bigger than six. It was also suggested that children of I.Q.s of over 105 selected for remedial help might be a 'poorer bet' than the slow-learning child (I.Q.s at about 90) who simply need continuous work planned as small learning units. The idea that the 'brighter' pupil is only retarded and will make quicker progress may be mistaken - such children can have specific and fairly intractable problems. Lawrence (Educ. Research, 13(2), 119-124) concluded on the basis of his somewhat limited experiment that in most cases of reading retardation, motivation can be increased by the planning of a personal counselling programme - capable of being carried out by "any sympathetic, intelligent layman, with a brief instruction in the techniques used". McG. Shiack (Educ. Research 13(3), 222-225) reported on the effectiveness of one of the S.R.A. reading laboratories with slow learning boys. Balow (Reading Teacher, 24(6), 513-525, 542), concluded that an important factor in a number of remedial programmes planned for severely disabled children using perceptual-motor activities was the ability and enthusiasm of the teacher, and that such programmes could be useful as non-specific additions to the curriculum but should not replace careful diagnosis and direct teaching. The article includes a critical evaluation of the use of the Frostig tests and materials, and the Delacato techniques. This article would be useful reading for anyone considering expenditure on the Frostig materials.

Laybourne (Reading 4(3), 4-12) reported on a language programme with backward readers based on tape recorded exchanges with an American class of mixed ability. Several papers in Reading and the Curriculum (Deininger, 38-42; Bloomfield 43-48; Parkin 49-53) described experiments with experience exchange and how both the able and less able children can benefit from this type of school work.

## Letter-name knowledge

American research increasingly has been finding evidence of a correlational nature between letter-name knowledge and later success in reading. Samuels (Reading Teacher, 24(7), 604-608, 662), examined this evidence critically and concludes that teachers should avoid the pressure from publishers to teach the letter names as this in itself will not ensure success. This revival of the alphabetic method has not occurred here yet, although some teachers will have noticed the approach to letter recognition used in the television programme 'Sesame Street' now being seen by some British children.

## Pre-schoolers

Jarman (Where No. 57, 148-150), reported on 150 letters from parents whose children had learned to read before going to school. The article includes information about the type of books and methods mentioned, and also that parents often felt 'guilty' about helping with a learning task that 'belonged to the school'. Widlake (Remed. Educ. 6(2), 14-17) described his use of the Peabody language scheme with pre-schoolers. He concluded that traditional nursery procedures although effective in producing language gains, could be even more effective if there were more child-adult verbal intercourse, and if the adults were more vividly aware of the process by which language improvement could be effected. An excellent account of the research which has shown the importance of the early years for language development was given by Professor Eric Hawkins to the B.M.A. An account of this appeared in the October issue of the Pre-School Playgroups Association magazine Contact. (Copies of the article 'Importance of the Early Years', price 12p including postage, from P.P.A., 87a Borough High Street, London, S.E.1).

## Materials

Parker (Remed. Educ. 6(3), 19-22) looked at reading materials for slow learners, and drew attention to the need to consider the burden in vocabulary controlled schemes which arises from the introduction of new words constantly accumulating in relation to the number of running words. Johnson (Reading Teacher, 24(5), 449-457) re-examined the Dolch word list, possibly the most influential of the sight word lists which has been a reference for the construction of tests, reading books, and readability formulas (first published 1941). He recommended the consideration of the list of Kucera and Francis published as Computational Analysis of Present Day American English (Providence: Brown University Press, 1967), which lists in rank order 50 406 distinct words from **the** to **thine**. It is interesting to see the words which were in common usage thirty years ago (Dolch) and which now do not appear in the new list, and vice versa. e.g. **best, green, please, write,** thank, even **funny**, disappear to be replaced by **more, Mr., Mrs., war,** and **world**, amongst others.

Keir in 1970 reported in Reading (4(1), 6-11) on the use of pictures as word illustrations and phonic clues, and this year Aliotti (Reading Teacher, 24(1), 3-6) reported on a study into the ability of disadvantaged first grade children to 'read a picture'. Albert (Reading Teacher, 24(7) 647-651, 664), discussed the difficulties children experience with illustrations in textbooks even at the higher levels of reading and suggested teacher strategies for ensuring that children understand such illustrations and that they do not add to their confusion. Adkins (Reading Teacher, 24(1), 7-11) provided some examples of the way in which idiomatic or figurative expressions in children's reading books could cause confusion, especially for children speaking English as a foreign language 'The smell of the bake shop would make **anyone's mouth water**' was interpreted as 'he needed water'; 'he wanted to have a drink', etc. and '**Like a flash** he ran through the woods' as 'It was raining'; 'He ran at night', etc.

Ralph (Rem. Educ. 6(2) 23-25) reported on the use of Breakthrough to Literacy with two groups of nine slow learning children for a period of about three months. Mackay (Reading and the Curriculum, p 225-236) described the Breakthrough materials and the thinking behind them. Cunningham (Reading 5(1), 23-30) reviewed the material as a new reading scheme, and concluded that although comprehensive trials of the material had been limited, the approach appeared feasible, but dependent upon the abilities, philosophies and attitudes of teachers using it. He recommended careful study and re-reading of the manual.

Dorothy Latham's study Six Reading Schemes: their Emphases and their Interchangeability, was produced as a booklet by the Cambridge Institute of Education (price 50p).

Reading and the Curriculum included three papers (Gilliland 144-158; Moyle 159-168; Heatlie and Ramsay 169-187) on readability.

Ellison and Williams (Reading 5(2), 3-9) reported a study of social class and children's reading preferences which suggested that children in E.P.A. schools might be more interested in readers dealing with adventure and mystery rather than stories with the realistic background of their own urban environment. Pugh (Reading, 5(1), 6-13) discussed the findings of a further survey on the reading interests and attitudes of secondary children in Leeds and the West Riding. Distaste for books suggested by the school was evident, but about half the children showed a genuine pleasure in reading. About one in three chose their books on the basis of author loyalty, and there was evidence that these children were doing a good deal of reading. The relationship between positive attitudes to reading, the amount of reading done, and measured reading ability was not as clear cut as the writer had anticipated.

Books in School - The Individual Child published by the Educational Publishers Council drew attention to the differences between L.E.A.s in regard to spending on books. The Times Educational Supplement (5th March) reported the findings under the heading "the great books scandal". An article 'Half a Million Books' (Trends in Education, 24, 28-34) described a survey in one L.E.A. in 1970 to assess the quantity and the quality of books used in 96 primary schools. The books per child ratio was 32, but there were considerable variations between schools, with one school having 52 textbooks per child. It was suggested that book collections should be more uniform in size and that schools could more actively promote books, (eg teachers more familiar with children's books, schools to join library associations, no unread book to go into a library, etc.).

**i.t.a.**

McCann (Reading 4(3), 24-27) reviewed developments in i.t.a. research and outlined Downing's apparent position in regard to the use and development of this medium. Downing himself described the course of the i.t.a. research and his current thinking in a paper 'i.t.a. - a review of ten years research' (Reading and the Curriculum, 61-81). He concluded in relation to the question "what is the best reading series in i.t.a.?"; "I don't think the books matter all that much. The difference between one i.t.a. series and another is not what matters most for the children. Much more important are the attitudes and methods of the teacher. "Southgate provided an excellent guide to the advantages and disadvantages of the various signalling devices in a paper 'Colour codes compared with i.t.a.' (Reading and the Curriculum, 95-110) Thackray (Reading and the Curriculum, 111-124) reported the results of his experiment on the readiness for reading of children using i.t.a. and t.o. Both groups had similar mean reading scores at the end of their first three years' schooling. Thackray considered i.t.a. simpler than t.o. in its visual and auditary structure.

**Phonic 'rules' and approaches to teaching**

Finally, the research on the usefulness of phonic rules included another contribution from Burmeister (Reading Teacher, 24(5), 439-442). He suggested the generalisation for final vowel-consonant **e** would be more useful if reworded as "when a word ends in a single vowel-single consonant **e**, the **e** is silent, and the vowel usually represents its own long or short sound - try the long sound first". He listed the exceptions in groups and suggested these should be taught as sight words.

Haslam (Reading, 5(1), 14-17) concluded from her experiment (not described) that it was 'advantageous' to consider pairs of initial consonants as spelling patterns, and to present them as one phonemic unit within the context of complete words, e.g. **pl** taught as that sound not as **puh** and **el**, since the **pl** sound does not vary. She reported that a period of direct teaching of such blends lead to facilitated word identification. Smith (Reading, 4(3), 19-22) described an intensive phonic approach (age of children not given), which started with the teaching of the long (ā) and short (ă) sounds of the vowels, and then continued with single initial and end consonants to construct real and unreal words. Stott described his Flying Start early education kit (Reading and the Curriculum, p. 212-224) and

Watkins (Reading, 5(2), 22-27) reported on the use of programmed material (Stott) to teach young children phonics. She found that the children differed in their reaction to the material, and she commented on the fact that one teacher was more effective with one method of teaching phonics than with another. She concluded "Educationists pre-suppose one method will not work for all children, and it is equally true that one method will not work with all teachers." Johnson (Rem. Educ., 6(3), 29-38) provided a clear account of different types of games which can be used in teaching reading.

**Other articles appearing in British publications during 1971**


CASHDAN, A. (1971) 'Learning to read : not reading at seven'.
Where, 55, 73-76.

DOWNING, J. (1971) 'Learning to read : messing about with the alphabet,'
Where, 53, 13-17.

GOODACRE, E. (1971) 'Hearing children read'.
Child Educ., June and July

GOODACRE, E. and CLARK, M. (1971) 'Initial approaches to teaching reading in Scottish and English Schools'. Reading, 5(2), 15-21.

REID, J. (1971) 'Learning to read : clues from colour'.
Where, 54, 53-55.

RUSSELL, J. (1970) 'Reading surveys',
Reading, 4(3), 13-18.

YOUNG, D. and STIRTON, M. (1971) 'G.W.R. Test Equivalences and reading ages.'
Remed. Educ. 6(3), 7-8.


This paper was based on an article prepared for the March issue of the U.K.R.A. journal Reading, 1972. The United Kingdom Reading Association (U.K.R.A.) produces its journal each term; also a newsletter.

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N.B. References for articles in the December issue of Reading are not included in this review, as it had not been published at the beginning of January, 1972. References for the December issue 1970 were included as these had been omitted from the review for 1970.

**SOME BOOKS PUBLISHED IN 1971**

CHAZAN M. and DOWNES edi. by Compensatory Education and the New Media. Occasional Publication 3. Schools Council Research Project on Compensatory Education. University College of Swansea Department of Education. 45p.

Includes articles on using television to develop reading readiness; stories and picture books in audio-visual versions, film strips etc: use of tape recorder for pre-reading games, reading practice, vocabulary extension, etc.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE. Slow Learners in Secondary Schools, Education Survey 15 H.M.S.O. 29p.

Includes facts such as two thirds of schools have no special department to deal with the 15% of the school population with learning difficulties. Out of the 170 full time assistant teachers in remedial departments, only 15 had taken a one year course of specialist study, 11 a one term course. Times Educ. Supp. Leader stated "In most schools the pupils are generally either taken from their ordinary class and made to concentrate on a limited diet of basic skills or left to flounder in an academic curriculum. Not surprisingly, many pupils retire bored, disaffected and semi-literate by the age of fifteen."

The T.E.S. investigated standards of literacy in Secondary schools during the year. See article 'The Making of Adult Illiterates' T.E.S. 1.10.71.

DOWING J. and THACKRAY, D. Reading Readiness U.L.P. Unibooks 75p. One of the U.K.R.A. monographs. Defines and traces the evolution of the concept. Summarises findings regarding relationship between readiness physiological, environmental, emotional and intellectual factors. Draws heavily on American sources. Discusses the effectiveness of readiness training.

GOODACRE, E. Children and Learning to Read. Routledge. Paperback 50p; cloth £1.00. Introductory text, concentrating on early stages of the development of the skill. Tries to bridge the gap between teaching and research, and provide a readable account of the psychological and perceptual processes involved.

GOODACRE, E. Provision for Reading. University of Reading School of Education. 50p paper-back. An account of a survey of English and Welsh L.E.A.s in November 1970 asking questions about provision of reading courses and book lists for teachers; use of reading tests and surveys; criterion for defining slow readers and provision for these children.

HUGHES, Felicity. Reading and Writing Before School. Jonathan Cape. £1.25. A practical account of how Mrs. Hughes taught her own two and three year old daughters to read, largely by using Doman's controversial method described in his Teach Your Baby To Read.

MERRITT, J. edi. by Reading and the Curriculum. Ward Lock Educational. £2.40. Proceedings of the seventh annual study conference of the United Kingdom Reading Association held at Durham in 1970. The title comes from the paper read by Professor Merritt which outlined a systematic framework for the purposeful teaching of reading. Other important issues, stemming from this main theme and covered in the lectures were the use of television, experience exchange and the assessment of the readability of reading materials.

MOSS, Elaine. Children's Books of the Year. Hamish Hamilton and National Book League. Paper-back 75p. A survey of books (fiction and information) selected from those sent by publishers to the N.B.L. List is divided into 12 sections and on introduction notes trends and major events in children's books for the year 1970. Includes title and author indexes, S.B.N. numbers and prices at time of going to press. The list is also used as the catalogue for the N.B.L. touring exhibition

(organised by the Education Officer, N.B.L., 7 Albermarle Street, London, WIX 4BB). Intended that the list will become an annual publication.

MOYLE, D and L. Modern Innovations in the Teaching of Reading. U.L.P. Unibooks. 75p. U.K.R.A. Monograph. A critical investigation of current teaching methods and their related reading materials.

THACKRAY, D. Readiness for Reading with i.t.a. and t.o. Geoffrey Chapman. £3.50. A detailed account of Dr. Thackray's three year investigation. The first part of the book includes an account of previous reading readiness research, and in particular, a critical appraisal of the design of the Main i.t.a experiment and a discussion of its results. Includes 133 tables of comparisons, statistical results, etc.

VERNON, M.D. Reading and Its Difficulties. Cambridge University Press. £3.20. Theoretical and research orientated account, discusses fully and clearly the development of the reading process and the problems of specific developmental dyslexia. Includes an Author and Subject Index, and a list of more than a hundred references to researches and experiments, mainly from the last five years.

WILKINSON, A. The Foundations of Language: Talking and Reading in Young Children. Oxford University Press. 50p. Begins with an account of modern linguistic theory, paying especial attention to the non-linguistic context of speech, and continues with a description of the acquisition of language by the child, and its relationship to thinking. The book concludes with a section on reading which describes various methods and the approaches suggested by eminent linguists.

CANE, B. and SMITHERS, J. (1971). The Roots of Reading - A study of 12 infant schools in deprived areas. National Foundation for Educational Research. £1.25. The third report in the NFER project 'Teaching Beginners to Read'. An account of differences in reading progress of children from a homogeneous group of schools in terms of neighbourhood and intake. Further evidence of the crucial role of the teacher. What distinguished the successful from the unsuccessful schools was "the existence among their teachers of clearly defined objectives, of a workmanlike approach to their task, of a systematic and planned series of exercises and activities, and of an eclecticism in amalgamating various methods and choosing - at appropriate times - the essential from each".

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